THE KIPCHAK TURKS.

THE racial origin and early history of the great Asiatic hordes which invaded Europe through the "Caspian Gates" is still a matter for speculation. Learned theorists have differed, and scholars have found the material too scanty to disclose the identity of these nomad peoples. Whether Tunguz, Mongol, Turkish or Finno-Ugrian blood and speech predominated in the armies of the Huns, Avars, Bulgars and Khazars, will probably never be known. More material exists about the later invaders,—the Pechenegs, the Ghuzz and the Cumans,[1] and it is quite certain that they were Turks. The first are fully described by a number of Greek writers from Constantine Porphyrogenetus to Anna Comnena. The history of the Ghuzz in Europe is short and unimportant. About the Cumans strangely little has been written. Yet their numbers and the vast extent of their territory, the prowess of their intrepid Khans and their influence on the great states of Eastern Europe, entitle them to more than a passing mention by the historian. The study of them involves some knowledge of the history of many centuries; the records concerning them have many gaps, and are written in very many languages. Yet the main facts of Cuman history are quite clear, and their importance is undeniable. It is difficult to conceive of a successful Mongol penetration of central Europe, if a great part of Eastern Europe had not been peopled by a Turkish folk not undisposed to welcome distinguished invaders with similar Turanian traditions of nomadic life, of rapacity and of unity under a despot. For, after all, Chingis Khan, though a Mongol, inherited the traditions and prestige of Oghuz Khan, the mythical hero of the Turks. In fact these early Turkish invaders of the

[1] It seems natural to use the name "Kipchaks" (when once it is explained), though the general Western name "Cumans" is also correct. "Pólovtsy" is a local name which is naturally used by Russian writers. "Pecheneg" seems nearer the original name than the Greek form Patzinak. The Ghuzz are here generally referred to as "Torks" because that was the name given them by the Russians on whose frontiers they dwelt, but the name must not be confused with the general use of the word "Turk," which includes all these peoples.

Black Sea steppe paved the way for the Mongols, just as the Seljuk Turks were the precursors of the Ottoman conquerors. Moreover, the expansion of the Turks south of the Caspian Sea occurred exactly at the same time as the invasion of the European grassland by the Ghuzz and the Cumans. The two invasions must be regarded as part of the same upheaval in Asia, which drove forth Bonyak to cross the Carpathians, to gaze on the magnificence of Constantinople and to strike the golden gates of Kiev, and at the same time sent Mahmud to great adventure in India and the Seljuk Khans to the conquest of Persia, the Caliphate and the Asiatic provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

The causes of that upheaval are obscure, but their main features can be disentangled from the confused web of Asiatic history. The growing weakness of China after the extinction of the Tang dynasty, and the subsequent decline of the Caliphate and the Eastern Empire, opened up two vast fields for the enterprise of Asiatic nomads. But the extraordinary growth and expansion of the Tunguz tribes (and later of the Mongols) resulted in a steady movement of the Turks westwards. The Keraits and other Eastern Turks were expelled from their old pastures near the Chinese frontier, the Uighurs appeared in Western Turkestan, so that both the Turkish centres on the Jaxartes, the Chu and the Ili, and the Kipchak or Northern steppe must have been packed with Turkish tribes seeking an outlet. That these crowded hordes did not break out sooner, was due to the strength of the two great kingdoms which separated Asiatic barbarism from Western civilisation: the Samanid Emirate on the Oxus, and the ancient Khazar empire on the Volga. About the end of the 10th century, however, both these states collapsed, partly through internal weakness, but mainly through the attacks of their more virile neighbours. The way southwards and westwards lay open to the Turks. What happened in the south is well known. Vast displacements of the Iranian population took place, which created a new Turkestan on the Oxus, transformed Azerbaidjan and the plateau of Asia Minor into Turkish lands, and led to the predominance of Turkish adventurers in Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and India. The greatest participators in this expansion were the Seljuk clans, who seem to have been Ghuzz Turks. Similarly, in the north, it was Ghuzz Turks who overran the Khazar Empire, weakened by the attacks of the Russians and Greeks in the west. These Ghuzz spread over the lands of the Pechenegs, with whom they eventually merged. But they were only a portion of the great Ghuzz group; they were

defeated on the Danube, they were nearly exterminated by the Russians on the Dnieper, and thereafter they played, under the name of "Torks," only a minor part in the history of the steppe. After the Ghuzz, and closely connected with them by race and tradition, so that some historians regard them as identical, came the great horde of Turks who became known to the Greeks and the western world as the Cumans.[1]

Who were these Cumans—a name strange to Chinese, Arab and Turkish records? They appear to have called themselves Kipchaks, which meant that they came from the Kipchak, a Turkish name applied vaguely to the great north-western steppe of Asia, now known as the Kirghiz steppe. History knows nothing of the early inhabitants of this region, but there seems to have been a gap in the Turkish world between the Altai tribes and the Naimans on the Irtish in the East, and the Ghuzz and Kangli tribes who stretched from the Volga to the Jaxartes. The overcrowded area of Turkestan must have poured out great streams of refugees into this northern grassland, and these numerous tribes, the "Turks of the Kipchak," were probably suffering from the westward pressure of the Naimans. On crossing the Volga they extended the name Kipchak to include the Don and Dnieper plain. The Arabs and Georgians alone called the Kipchaks by their true name. It appears in western sources for the first time in Edrisi, who refers to the original Kipchak in Asia, after a detailed description of Comania.[2] While the Greeks called the Kipchaks "Comans," the Saxons of Transylvania called them Valvi, or Falben, *i.e.*, "sallow people." The Russians called them Pólovtsy, which some philologists derive from *polovoy*, "sallow," but which is generally taken to mean "steppe folk" from *pole*, "field," *i.e.*, it is a translation of the Turkish "Kipchak." The Hungarians used both words in the forms "Kun" and "Palocz." Cuman is generally said to be derived from the River Kuma, but it is difficult to believe that western writers adopted the name of a river so remote. The conclusive proof of the name and race of the Kipchaks is found in later writers like Rubruquis, who says that all the land from the Dnieper to the Volga was formerly inhabited by the "Coman Kipchaks," and that their language was like that of the Kangli

[1] Latin form Cumani, sometimes Comani or Kumani; Greek form Komanoi.

[2] The migrations of the Turks puzzled the Arab geographers, who were in the habit of borrowing much of their material from earlier writers. The same Edrisi describes the Pechenegs as living near the Volga, long after they had ceased to exist as a separate people.

Turks and very close to the Uighur, the earliest Turkish language to produce a literature.

The new pasture lands of the Kipchaks were in the great steppe between the Volga and the Don, where they conquered the survivors of the Khazar Empire and drove the Alans—the "Yas" of the Russian chronicles—further south, though for some time we find Khazar towns still existing on the Don, and the Alans continued their wanderings far north of their own kingdom in the Caucasus. In search of wider pastures, the Kipchaks rapidly overran the lands of the Torks and Pechenegs west of the Don, both these hordes having recently suffered disastrous defeats at the hands of the Russians. In 1054 the Kipchaks appeared on the borders of Rus, in 1070 they crossed the Carpathians, and in 1090 they were already on the Danube. They seem to have decisively defeated the Pechenegs in 1087 and then to have been called in by the Emperor Alexis, whose European dominions were endangered by the incursion of great masses of fugitive Pechenegs. They shared in Alexis' great victory at Lebunion in 1091, but soon became as great a curse to the Balkan provinces as their predecessors. Having gratified their natural desire for the spacious grasslands of Eastern Europe, the new-comers began to realise the great opportunities for increasing their wealth by the plunder of their civilised neighbours, and for fifty years they were an active and formidable menace to the security of the Greek, Hungarian and Russian frontier provinces. The empire was the best able to protect itself. In possession of a standing army well versed in the tactics of Turkish warfare after a long experience of Pecheneg invasions, with a well-organised frontier province, the Paristrion, partly screened by a fringe of Pecheneg and Ghuzz nomads, who had taken up new quarters along the Danube, Alexis was in no serious danger from the Kipchaks unless they were leagued with a Pretender or with dissatisfied Bulgarians. Hungary, too, enjoyed relative immunity owing to the distance of its important cities from the eastern frontier. The mountain barrier and the large province of Transylvania, inhabited by poor but tenacious Roumanian communities, and by Székely (Szeklers) as ferocious as the Turks, enabled St. Ladislas to cope successfully with the invaders, who after decisive defeats at Cserhalom and Lake Hód, ceased to be more than occasional raiders till the 13th century.

In Russia the situation was far different. Its wealthiest cities, Kiev, Pereyaslavl and Chernigov, lay near the southern frontier and were permanently exposed to the incursions of the

crafty Turks. For their periodic migrations north and south they found the rich pastures of the Ozu, as they called the Dnieper, most congenial; and on the rich grasslands up the river, they found the Russians firmly established and beginning to practise agriculture. The eternal struggle of settled and pastoral people was long and obstinate in this region, and the Kipchaks came to regard the capital of this coveted territory, Menkerman, "the great city" (so they called Kiev)[1] as the centre of their world. This fierce struggle of Russians and Turks for the borderland, was the chief political feature in the history of the Kievan State, and resulted in the depopulation of its southern provinces and the transference of its economic and political centres to the hills of Galich, and the dense forests of the north-east where immunity from the raids of the nomads could be enjoyed. Though the Kipchaks never produced formidable military leaders like Attila or Chingis with united armies, their Khans were able to collect sufficient forces to terrorise the Russian borders. Particularly truculent was Bonyak the Scabby, "the godless," "the plunderer," who had taken part in the invasions of the empire. He led many an expedition into Kiev territory, and in 1096 actually penetrated into the Pechersky monastery "while we were in our cells resting after Matins," writes the author of the *Povest*, startled out of his impersonal chronicle by the terror of the event. So redoubtable a warrior was Bonyak that he was employed as an ally by the Russian princes, and enabled them to win their great victory over the Hungarians on the San in 1097. Monomakh's son once exiled certain princes of Polotsk because they spoke well of Bonyak before him;[2] and after the death of the great Khan, his son was killed trying to strike his lance on the Golden Gate of Kiev "as his father had done before him." Other Khans like Tugorkan, Sharukan the Old, Altunopa and Ayepak, were a serious menace to the security of the Kiev State and constantly harassed the trade caravans on which the wealth and prosperity of the southern cities mainly depended.

It would be absurd to consider the possibility of a conquest of Russia by the Kipchaks. They had not the organisation or the military and administrative resources for such an enterprise. But they nearly succeeded outright in driving Russian civilisation off the northern fringe of grassland which formed the main part

[1] This information is given us by a late traveller, Schiltberger.

[2] "Ne slushakhut ego, koli e zoviashet v Ruskuyu zemliu v pomoshch, no pache molvyakhu Bonyakovi sheludivomu vo zdorovye." (*Ipat. Letopis*, 1140.)

of the principalities of Kiev, Pereyaslavl and Chernigov. To have achieved this, would have brought to a sudden end the brilliant Russian civilisation which had still many achievements and triumphs before it—priceless traditions to be handed down to the new colonies just beginning to spread over the Volga-Oka *mezhdurechie* and form the foundations of a new Muscovite Rus. The preservation and development of the economic and cultural treasures of the Kiev State are due to the prowess and statesmanship of Vladimir Monomakh, his sons and grandsons.

Vladimir grew up at the court of his father Vsevolod, who ruled the border principality of Pereyaslavl from 1055 to 1073. He was from the first well aware of the character and the imminence of the new danger that threatened Rus, and was in a better position than the princes of the north to realise that only energetic measures could save Russian territory from a speedy penetration by the predatory and aggressive Turks. During his own tenure of the minor throne of Pereyaslavl in 1076–78 and again after 1093, Vladimir made full use of all the defensive resources of a Russian prince of the day. Lines of earthworks and palisades on the Sula and the Trubezh were constantly manned by watchmen and scouts who could hold in check a small party of raiders, and warn the prince of a more serious invasion. The *druzhina* or war-band of a prince was always ready to follow him at a moment's notice. Vladimir's growing prestige enabled him to recruit his band from many sources, and he made more use than before of nomads from the borderlands—a practice which he systematised later on. Lastly, there was the *polk*, the militia of the city—an unwieldy body of varying numerical strength—which was under the orders of the *Veche* or Assembly, and might be recalled from service by that body—an event which happened on several occasions and seriously embarrassed the prince concerned. Vladimir realised the weakness of this parochial system of defence. If Pereyaslavl was well defended, there was nothing to prevent the well-informed foe from attacking the Ros instead of the Sula, and surprising a less wary prince on the right bank of the Dnieper. He strove constantly for a closer union of the princes against the common enemy,[1] and so strenuously did he urge his policy on his senior, the weak and unpopular Svyatopolk of Kiev, and on his own enemy Oleg of Chernigov, that very soon the invasions were met

[1] This was of course only a revival of the unity of Rus under Yaroslav, maintained by his sons, which had enabled them to defeat the Pechenegs and Torks.

by a union of princes with a common strategic plan. Vladimir also revived the practice of his great-grandfather, St. Vladimir, of employing the petty Turkish tribes as auxiliary horsemen. The whole of the Russian frontier was covered with broken tribes of former Turkish federations. The Berendians on the Upper Ros,. the Pechenegs and the Torks (with their important centre Torchesk) south of the Ros and Sula rivers, gradually became for the Russians allies with unexampled experience in nomad warfare, and with unusual opportunities for transmitting news about the movements in the steppe. Having inspired the princes with a common purpose and having collected ample man power, Vladimir felt strong enough to adopt a strategy of offence. At the Congress of Lubech, where most of the princes were concerned with questions of succession, he adroitly manœuvred them into an alliance against the Turks. Interrupted by the tragedy of Vasilko, this alliance was renewed in 1103 at Dolobskoye Ozero and resulted in the great campaigns of 1103 and 1111, which saved Russia from the Turks for sixty years.

The account of these great expeditions in the Chronicle is scanty in detail as compared with the description of Igor's disaster in 1185,[1] and the additional evidence given in Vladimir's *Pouchenie* (*My Charge to my Children*) is confused in its chronology. Both campaigns were conducted jointly by Svyatopolk of Kiev, David of Chernigov, and Vladimir of Pereyaslavl with their sons. In 1103 a prince of Polotsk participated, and the Russian forces proceeded down the Dnieper on horseback and in boats, passed the falls, and, after assembling their forces on the island of Hortitsa (later the famous centre of the Zaporozhian Cossacks), plunged into the steppe and marched due East for four days. At a place called Suten the main force of the Kipchaks was encountered, and a great victory was gained by the Russians in which twenty Khans were killed (including the redoubtable Altunopa), masses of sheep, horses, camels and slaves were captured, and numbers of Torks and Pechenegs came over to the Russian side. In 1111 the advance into the steppe was not made down the Dnieper, but by an easterly route crossing the Sula, Psel and Vorskla. Several towns were captured in the Don region, the Don itself was crossed, and finally on 27 March on the Salnitsa a great victory was gained by the Russians. In 1116 Vladimir sent his son Yaropolk on a further expedition

[1] It is significant that the Novgorod Chronicle mentions both Vladimir's campaigns, but is silent about the expedition of Igor.

to the Don, where he occupied several towns and whence he brought back as wife a beautiful Alan princess.[1]

In the course of these campaigns we hear of a number of towns in the Don basin. Some of these,—Sharukan, Osenev and Sugrov are evidently the headquarters of the Kipchak chieftains, whose names they represent. Others, like Sarkel (Russian "Belovezha") and probably Suten and Balin were real towns, containing like Tmutarakan, a mixed population of Khazars and Alans—isolated fragments of the Khazar empire which were rapidly disappearing before the relentless hatred of the nomads for settled life. The inhabitants of Sarkel in the year 1117 moved *en masse* into Russia, and were given a new home by Vladimir at Belovezha on the Oster.

If the details of those campaigns are scanty and their topography vague, their results are obvious. The Kipchak power was broken. Most of their Khans were killed, captured or driven into exile. Bonyak the Scabby seems to have escaped, though his brother was killed. Neither he nor Sharukan are heard of again. Ayepak fled to the Bolgars on the Volga, where he was poisoned. The Russian borders were safe for half a century. From the time of Bonyak till the days of Konchak few raids disturbed the peace of southern Russia, though frequent use was made of the nomads in intestine feuds. During the reign of Vladimir and his two sons, 1113–39, there is scarcely a single violation of the frontier recorded. Another important result of the Russian victories was that practically all the Torks and Pechenegs left the Kipchak steppes and transferred their allegiance to Russia. They took up their abode not only in the steppes south of the Ros and the Sula, but further inside Russian territory, between the Ros and the Stugna, in certain parts of Chernigov, and all over the principality of Pereyaslavl. Besides the Torks, Pechenegs and Berendians, we hear of Kayepichi, Kovuye and Turpeye. But in the usual Turkish fashion these petty tribes soon became merged in a new federation of Turks, who took the name of Karakalpaks or Blackcaps.[2]

In occupation of a great part of the Russian marches, the Karakalpaks provided an admirable screen for Russia against the Kipchaks. It is possible that Kipchak chieftains also settled in Russian territory, as we find the expression "wild Polovtsy" used in the Chronicle, implying that there were also tributary

[1] "Zhenu, krasnu velmi, Yasskago knyazya dshcher." (*Ipat. Letopis*, 1116.)

[2] The name first appears in the *Ipatyevskaya Letopis* in 1146.

Polovtsy. Unfortunately these friendly Turks were employed extensively in the incessant civil wars that followed the death of Yaropolk, *e.g.*, Izyaslav Mstislavich, the most valiant of Vladimir's grandsons, was a great leader of Berendians and Torks. They even became an important factor in Russian political life; and we find the election of a Prince carried out not only by Russians, but by "the Russian land and the Black-caps." It is a matter for debate whether the exodus of Russian peasants to the north-east was not due to the peaceful penetration of these barbarians, as much as to the external pressure of the hostile Kipchaks. In the bitter civil strife of the 12th century, a Russian prince found these mobile horsemen more valuable subjects than the peaceful Russian peasants.[1] The changed conditions on the frontier stand out sharply when we find a Blackcap Khan like Kuntuvdey invested with a Russian appanage on the Ros. It was but a step from hiring Blackcap mercenaries (*svoi poganye*, our own heathens, as they were called) to the employment of "wild" Turks. Oleg of Chernigov had left a bitter memory as the originator of this fatal practice, which had been confirmed by a number of diplomatic marriages with daughters of the Khans.[2] Yury, the youngest son of Vladimir Monomakh, again resorts to this practice to hold his own against the numerous Blackcap followers of his nephew Izyaslav. Rurik Rostislavich, quite a patriotic prince and a great benefactor to the Church, was also a great favourite with the "wild" Turks, with whose help he plundered Kiev in 1203. Finally, at the time of the Mongol invasion we hear of a shadowy Izyaslav of Chernigov who is purely a Turkish chieftain. The process was inevitable, and no one can doubt that the weakening of the Russian element in the south was an accomplished fact before the Mongol conquest.[3]

[1] After all, a clan of horsemen, rich in flocks and herds, with its readiness to serve, its rapacity and its mobility in the field, was a far more lucrative investment for a prince or boyar than a small settled community of Russians with their few horses, their primitive agriculture, their ties with a given spot and their military uselessness. The former were generally ready for war; the latter merely involved responsibilities for their defence.

[2] The marriage of the Chernigov princes with Kipchak princesses was copied by Svyatopolk of Kiev and later by Monomakh's family. It must have brought a great deal of Turkish blood into the Russian stock, since the boyars must probably have made similar marriages. We even hear of a Russian princess who ran away into the steppe to marry a Kipchak Khan.

[3] Apart from ancient cities like Tmutarakan, Oleshe, Kherson and Kaffa, which were for a time Slav, and became Greek and then Genoese, we see the rise of a mixed population in the steppes, like the Cossacks of

It should be noticed that Vladimir's victories led to no extension of Russian territory. He limited himself to the consolidation of the frontiers. The settlements on the Ros and Sula were restored and cities like Yuriev flourished once more, but no permanent occupation of southern territory was made such as had resulted from the victories of Svyatoslav Igorevich. In fact such an important city as Tmutarakan was not recovered. The Kipchaks, forced to relinquish their hold on the northern belt of grassland, were driven to dwell nearer the Black Sea coast. They proceeded to strengthen their hold on Crimea and on the steppes of the Kuban and the Kuma, and turned for booty and adventure to the wealthy lands of the Caucasus. An obscure passage in the Russian Chronicle[1] relates how Otrok, a Kipchak Khan, after the victories of Vladimir, fled to Abkhazia, and only after the lapse of some years returned to the steppes, where he became the father of the famous Konchak. Turning to the Georgian Chronicle we read that about this time a certain Atrak, son of Sharagan (surely identical with Sharukan), of the people called "Qivchaqui," appeared in Georgia, and that his daughter married the king, David II. This same Atrak brought with him a large band of followers who entered the service of Georgia and helped the army to defeat the Seljuk Sultan. We hear at the same time of Kipchaks serving the petty Shahs of Lesgia and Aran. The relations between the Kipchaks and Georgia are also evident in the story of Yury, son of the Grand Prince Andrew of Suzdal, who was exiled by his uncle Vsevolod and took refuge with the Turks. From the Kipchak country he was conducted by a noble of Tiflis to Georgia, where he married the Queen, the celebrated Tamara. There was no direct territorial contact between the Kipchaks and Georgia; for we read that mercenaries coming from the steppes had to ask permission of the King of the Alans to pass through his territory, which was probably north of the Pass of Dariel (sometimes called the "Gate of the Alans" to distinguish it from the Derbend route, which was called the "Iron Gate," the "Gate of the Khazars" or the "Gate of Gates"). By this route a second wave of adventurers from the Kipchak flowed into Georgia in the second half of the century. The armies of George III. and Tamara, in the victories

later times. The princes of Berlad and Bolokhov and the Brodniki of the Upper Don and of Moldavia represent semi-Slav communities with an admixture of Turk, Roumanian and other nationalities. The Slav element must have grown weaker, since at the Mongol invasion they mostly fought against the Russians.

[1] *Ipat. Letopis*, 1201.

which made Georgia for a time the great military power of western Asia, used Kipchak mercenaries as auxiliary cavalry; and we hear of a remarkable Turkish General Qubasar who achieved success under both these sovereigns. A distinction is made in the Georgian Chronicle between the new Kipchaks and the old, *i.e.*, between the new adventurers and the old immigrants under Atrak, who had now settled down and become Christians.[1]

Meanwhile the great struggle of Yury Monomakhovich and his sons against his nephews, culminating in the sack of Kiev by Andrew, had permanently weakened southern Rus and had systematised the employment of Kipchaks all over the Russian land. The personal prestige of Vladimir and his ideal of unity were nearly forgotten, and the frontier lay open once more to enterprising raiders, who began in 1167 to attack the merchants on their way to and from Greece. A congress met at Kanev in 1170 to discuss the defence of the southern trade routes. But a formidable enemy now emerged in the person of Konchak, who for two decades threatened the security of the southern principalities, as they had not been threatened since the beginning of the century. For a time, the old story of raids and invasions was renewed, culminating in the ill-fated attempt of Prince Igor to "drink the Don in his golden helm" in emulation of Monomakh. His expedition is described in detail in the Kievan Chronicle, and in more heroic form is the subject of the great mediæval epic (*The Tale of the Host of Igor*). The monkish chronicler bestows on Konchak all the abusive epithets usually given to pagan foes. Yet intermarriages took place between Turks and Russians, and this "godless," "damned" and "thrice-accursed" Khan seems to have been regarded as an honourable enemy by the members of the Druzhina class. Many of his attacks were directed against the Chernigov frontier,[2] showing the rise of a prosperous province around the cities of Putivl and Kursk on the Seym—the region that came to be called the Severian Ukraine. The old Pereyaslavl region was stoutly defended at this time by Gleb Yurievich and his son Vladimir, who reigned there from 1154 to 1187. On the death of the latter, a great grandson of Monomakh, the chronicle states that "the whole Ukraine mourned."

The serious danger from the nomads died down after 1187, either owing to the death of the redoubtable Konchak, or because

[1] Brosset: *Histoire de la Georgie.*

[2] Or rather the frontier of Novgorod-Seversk, which had become a principality separate from Chernigov.

the Kipchaks found a fresh field for their activities. In the chronicle it is recorded under the year 1187 that "the Polovtsy had gone to the Danube." This refers to the rise of a new Bulgarian state, in which the Kipchaks and their subjects the Wallachs played an important part. The nationality of the royal dynasty of the Asens is a matter for dispute, but later rulers of Bulgaria like Tertery were pure Kipchaks.[1] This new field for adventure brought the Turks once more up to the walls of Constantinople, where they came into contact with the western crusaders. An interesting account of the customs of the "Comans" is given in Joinville, while they are constantly mentioned in the chronicle of Villehardouin: "the Comans and Wallachians scoured the land up to the gates of Constantinople. . . . The Comans seized the cattle off the land, and took captive men, women and children, and destroyed the cities and castles, and caused such ruin and desolation that never has man heard tell of greater."[2]

Under the influence of the Bulgarians many Kipchaks doubtless became Christians and settled down to a civilised mode of life, as we know they had done in Georgia and the Russian marches.[3] But the most interesting attempt to convert them to Christianity was made in the Carpathian region. The mixed population of the Hungarian borderlands was reinforced in the 13th century by Saxon colonists, and by the Teutonic Knights who built many castles and began to penetrate the nomad lands in Wallachia. A bold attempt to win over the pagans to Christianity was made by the Pope in the establishment of a "Bishopric of the Cumans" north of the River Buzeu. The bishopric was short-lived and disappeared after the Mongol invasion, but it is interesting to see the influence of the western Church reaching the Turks in rivalry with the preachers of Orthodox Christianity.

In Russia more tranquil times succeeded the stormy days of Konchak—that curious Indian summer of Kievan Rus when an Olgovich reigned in Kiev in close friendship with a Monomakhovich, when Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyaslavl were closely allied and the "Polovtsy" not unfriendly, when Svyatoslav and Rurik founded churches and patronised learning under the benignant

[1] Both Osen (or Asen) and Tertery appear as the names of Kipchak Khans in the Russian Chronicle. The Asens are also claimed as Roumanians by the historians of that nation.

[2] Villehardouin: *Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade*, 1206.

[3] Witness the number of Russian Christian names,—Gleb, Yury, Vsevolod, etc., that begin to appear among the Kipchak Khans.

eye of Vsevolod of Suzdal. It is a rude blow when the Kievan Chronicle ends abruptly and we see that Roman of Volyn is really dictator of southern Rus. Rurik, at the head of "wild Polovtsy," plunders Kiev; and we realise that the trade of Kiev has gone, the peasants have left for the north, and in a queer twilight puppet princes play fantastic games of war for tiny appanages at the head of Blackcaps and "wild" Turks—faint shadows of the earlier princes with their sturdy Slavonic war-bands. When the Mongols appear at the gates of Kiev, there is not even a prince to defend the ancient capital. The nomad had won; and the fate of the border cities like Pereyaslavl is very like the fate of Sarkel after the fall of the Khazar empire.

The independent existence of the Kipchaks was also brought to an end by the Mongols. But no portion of their history has been so little noticed by historians as their fate after the Mongol invasions. Yet at no other time do we get such full accounts of them by their contemporaries,—and for the best of reasons, that the dispersion of the nomads drove them in great numbers into the surrounding lands. The first blow fell on them from the south. A small but compact Mongol army under the great leaders Djebe and Subuday, after rounding up the survivors of the vanquished armies of the Shah of Khvarazm, was ordered to invade the Kipchak to restore unity among the Turkish peoples. After defeating the Georgian army, they crossed the mountains of the Caucasus and advanced to meet the united armies of the Alans and Kipchaks with their Circassian and Lesgian allies. With characteristic diplomacy the Mongols detached the Kipchaks from their allies on the plea that they were brother Turks. So they defeated the coalition. But the Kipchaks under Yury, son of Konchak and Kotyan or Kuten thought better of it, and fled to the Russian frontier, where they invoked the aid of their ancient foes. Once more the Mongols subtly tried to divide their enemies, assuring the Russians that they had no quarrel with them, but desired to chastise their own slaves the Kipchak Turks. The Russians rejected their overtures and allowed themselves to be manœuvred into an unfavourable position on the River Kalka, where they were completely defeated. The Mongol army returned home over the Volga, having marched right round the Caspian Sea. At this time, probably, the Mongol domination in eastern Kipchak was established under Djuchi and his sons. Kuten remained in the west and fought for Daniel of Galich against the Hungarians. When the second Mongol invasion took place, he fled to Hungary with a large

number of Turks, while another Khan Yunus crossed the Danube and helped the Latins at Constantinople against the Greeks. We hear in eastern records of protracted resistance by the Kipchaks on the Volga and in the Caucasus. But soon the whole of the steppe passed into the hands of the victorious Mongols and formed the Kipchak or Golden Horde under Batu with its capital at Sarai on the Volga.

What became of the numerous Kipchak tribes after the Mongol conquest? We know that enormous numbers of them perished in the Mongol invasions. Carpini mentions the bones and skulls which he saw strewn along the whole route from Kiev to the Mongolian capital.[1] We know, too, that thousands of Turks fled to Crimea where they were sold as slaves by the Venetian and Genoese merchants. Of these we shall say something later. A large group took refuge in Bulgaria, where they were gradually absorbed into the Bulgarian nation. More interesting was the fate of those who fled to Hungary. More than one Magyar king had favoured the Kipchaks. It was said of Stephen II. that he *diligebat Cunos plusquam decebat.* The new-comers played a sinister part during the Mongol invasion, but later on they were well treated by King Ladislas IV. who was himself half a Kipchak and had been rebuked by the papal legate for adopting Turkish weapons, speaking Turkish and shaving his beard. He deserted his wife for three Turkish women, and ultimately was killed by Kipchaks in a brawl. The Kipchaks were welcomed in Hungary and settled over a large area on the Tisza. They gave their name to the counties of Great and Little Kunsag, where their descendants continued to speak the Kipchak language as late as the 18th century. The elements of that language have been preserved in the Codex Cumanicus (edited by Kéza in 1880). They formed an important part of the Hungarian army. A large force of Cumans participated in the decisive battle of the Marchfield in 1278, when the great Czech king Otokar lost his life. They are mentioned even later as assisting the Polish king Lokietek in the battle of Plowce against the Teutonic Order in 1331.

But all these were small fragments of the vast Kipchak hordes. There is little doubt that the main mass continued to inhabit their former pasture lands under Mongol rule. Carpini writes that when the Tartars defeated them, some fled and some

[1] The "graves of the Comans," described by travellers as reaching all the way from Kiev to the Yaik, are of course only the ordinary "kurgans" in which Turkish nobles were buried.

were reduced to slavery, but that many of those who fled came back again. The Genoese merchants of Crimea used the "Cuman" language exclusively in their dealings with the Kipchak in the 14th century. If strong Bolgar elements survived among the Tartars of Kazan, and the Astrakhan Tartars preserved an admixture of Khazar blood, the Crimean and Nogay Tartars were certainly composed mainly of Kipchak Turks with an admixture of the dominant, but small ruling class of Mongols.[1] The strength of Nogay must have been based largely on Kipchak and Alan elements, and his empire corresponds closely with the former Kipchak territory from the Bug to the Kuma. The name Kipchak not only survives among the Crimean Tartars, but is used by one of the Uzbeg tribes and by one of the largest groups of the Kirghiz-Kaizaks who occupy the eastern part of the former Kipchak.[2] It is probable that the Mongol conquest made no considerable change in the ethnographical composition of the Black Sea nomads.

More dramatic, if less important to their own race, was the astonishing distinction achieved by Kipchak leaders by marriage and in war in foreign lands after the loss of their own independence. We have already mentioned that the Turkish Khans frequently gave their daughters in marriage to Russian princes. Thus Svyatopolk, Monomakh's ally, married the daughter of Tugorkan ; and Monomakh's two younger sons took Turkish wives. The greatest position was attained by Kuten, who gave one daughter in marriage to Mstislav the Bold, one of the greatest Russian princes, and the other to Stephen V., king of Hungary, where she became regent and mother of Ladislas IV., "The Cuman," and of a daughter who married one of the Greek Palæologi. The adventurer Tertery not only became king of Bulgaria, but gave his daughter Anna in marriage to Uroš II., king of Serbia. Thus rulers of Kipchak origin sat on the thrones of Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Georgia and Greece. Marriages with crusaders are also recorded. Kipchak prowess in the armies of Hungary, Bulgaria, Russia and Georgia has already been mentioned. The Chinese Yüan Shi gives the biographies of several Kipchak generals in the Far East, *e.g.*, Tu-tu-ha who was a prince and general in Kubilai's army, and his son Yentimur who was a Minister in China.[3] Adventurers from the "Kincha" (as the

[1] Perhaps some day Turkish scholars (who tend to limit their studies to the Ottomans) will throw more light on this question by a comparison of the "Cuman," Nogay and other Turkish languages.

[2] There is also a small tribe of Kipchaks in Turkestan.

[3] Bretschneider : *Medieval Researches*, II, p. 73.

Chinese called it) seem, like the Alans, to have prospered all over the Mongol world.

But the most striking feature of the dispersion of the Kipchaks is found in the careers carved out by those who were sold as slaves in Egypt and who established the Mameluke dynasty,—Beibars, Kelavun, Ladjin and others. Greatest of these was Beibars, who not only rose to be one of the most magnificent Sultans of Egypt, but was the first general to defeat the hitherto invincible Mongols in battle. These Sultans continued to interest themselves in their native steppes and maintained close relations with the Court of the Golden Horde, where they endeavoured to implant the Mohammedan faith of their adopted country. It is from Egyptian historians that we get some of our fullest information about the Kipchaks themselves. The list of Turkish Amirs in Egypt is of great philological interest, and should be investigated by a competent Turkish scholar. Many of their names occur in the Russian chronicles, *e.g.*, Beibars, Aibek, Bereke, Akush, Altunopa, Osen and Kobek. A list of the Kipchak tribes is given by Novairi. The Borch or Burdjoglu, to which Kelavun belonged, are the Burchevichi of the Russian writers, the Taksaba are the Toksobichi. The tribe of Beibars himself, the Olberli looks like the doubtful name ("Otperluy") of a large tribe between the Don and Volga. These facts are typical of the remote sources from which the historian has to collect his material for the history of the Kipchaks.

To understand the character and manners of the Kipchak Turks, it is necessary to study the life of the Kirghiz-Kaizaks of our own day, while the methods of their invasions of Russia have much light thrown upon them by an examination of the tactics of the Crimean and Nogay Tartars, and the *shlyakhi* or routes which they used in their incursions into Poland and Muscovy. The early chroniclers do not give us any clear account of the ordinary life of the Turks, and we must remember that they were far more warlike and more primitive than the nomads of our own day. Some quaint details of Kipchak customs have come down to us. Bonyak, before he would consent to help the Russians in the campaign that ended so victoriously on the San, went out at midnight and howled like a wolf. When a wolf howled back, and many wolves joined in the chorus, the Khan returned and assured Prince David that the campaign would be successful. Joinville describes how the Latins and Comans, allying themselves against the Greeks, mingled their blood and drank it. "The Comans then caused a dog to pass

between their people and our people, and cut the dog in pieces with their swords, our people doing the same; and they said that whoso failed the other in this alliance on either side, should thus be cut in pieces." Joinville also describes the burial of a Kipchak nobleman who was placed in the tomb seated and "very nobly apparelled" together with "his best horse and his best sergeant, both alive, bearing a letter to the first of their kings." Villehardouin gives an account of the favourite Kipchak method of warfare, the feigned retreat and subsequent rally, cutting off detachments and breaking up the clumsy bodies of knights—methods similar to those which had troubled Europe at the Magyar invasion and had exercised the minds of Byzantine generals for centuries.

The territory occupied by the Kipchaks in their days of independence was as follows. Their southern boundary was the Black Sea from the mouth of the Danube to the mouth of the Kuban, whence an undefined frontier with the Alans led across to the mouths of the Kuma and the Volga. Somewhere between the Volga and the Yaik or Ural River, their eastern frontier marched with that of their kinsmen the Kangli Turks, who had succeeded the Ghuzz in the steppes of the Yaik, the Emba and the Syr Darya, and who sought adventure mainly in the lands of Khvarazm, whose Shah they often helped in war. From somewhere near Saratov the Kipchak frontier turned westwards bordering the Bolgar and Finnish tribes as far as the Upper Don. All the way from Elets to the upper waters of the Seret the Kipchaks were neighbours of the Russians, the frontier running south of the Seym, the Psel and the Ros. Their western border ran along the Carpathian range from the upper Seret to Orsova. It then followed the Danube to its mouth. This enormous area, stretching from Hungary to the Kirghiz steppe, from Bulgaria on the Danube to Bolgaria on the Volga, embracing all the Lower Volga, the Don, the Lower Dnieper, and the Lower Danube, brought the Kipchaks into contact with southerners like the Greeks and Georgians, and with the northern peoples of Bolgaria, Suzdal and Poland.

The great weakness of the Kipchaks was disunion. They never attained the discipline of the troops of the Huns and Mongols, because their original home was far from China, Persia and even central Turkestan. They had no model of despotic government, and even the tradition of Oghuz Khan must have been dim in the remote northern steppe. They were never more than a loose federation of tribes, each under its own Khan,

which united occasionally for a special enterprise under a prominent leader. Their strength was in their lack of fixed habitations which could be captured, their mobility and their resource in living on the land where they were fighting. Weak as they were as a political force, their numbers and their swift movements made them formidable to all their neighbours, while their ability is evident from the astonishing aptitude they showed as individuals under favourable conditions, for civilised life, for administration and for scientific warfare. If in the main they belonged to "the peoples without history" (to use Professor Myres' expression), the convulsion that expelled them from Asia and the Mongol invasion which dispersed them, drove them from their seclusion into the main corridors of history, and caused them to play no small part in the evolution of the states into which they were thrust. The sober historian cannot but be impressed by the results of their pressure on the neighbouring states. In the Caucasus they helped to depress the Alans and to exalt the Georgians. Their presence across the Danube was a continual stimulus to unrest among the conquered Bulgarians, and finally helped that people to regain its independence. In Hungary they both helped and hindered the progress of the Magyars. They reduced them to their own barbarous level in the terrible years of the Mongol occupation. They gave them admirable material for their armies in later years. Perhaps their most important influence on Hungarian history was that they prevented the Magyars from colonising the Wallachian plain, which was thus kept open for the subsequent rise of the Roumanian principalities. They may be considered responsible for that emigration of the Russians from the south which changed the whole course of Russian history. After the defeat of the Pechenegs and Torks, Russia seemed likely to keep up a close connection with the Black Sea coast, The Kipchaks prevented this, and it is their principal achievement in history. Finally, as was stated before, they paved the way for the Mongol conquest. Their very presence in Europe as an untamed Turkish people was one of the main incentives to Mongol invasion. Like other pastoral peoples, they had been content to lead a peaceful existence in obscurity. But the overcrowding of the grasslands and other historical factors, caused them to take a prominent part in the events of three centuries—a part which has not been sufficiently appreciated by historians.

A. Bruce Boswell.

University of Liverpool.